

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, and 22-42 are pending in this application. Claims 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, and 22-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 4,760,606 to Lesnick et al. (herein "Lesnick") in view of U.S. patent 5,666,490 to Gillings et al. (herein "Gillings") and further in view of the Microsoft Publication "Getting Results with Microsoft Office 97", 1997, pp. 376-381 (herein "Microsoft Office"). That rejection is traversed by the present response as discussed next.

Each of the independent claims is amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein. Specifically, independent claim 1 now further recites the image information server storing information in "a group name table", that the group name is "previously registered in a group name table", and the controller determining if the group name is registered "by retrieving the group name table". That claimed subject matter is believed to be fully supported for example by Figures 5 and 6 in the present specification and the corresponding discussion thereto. The other independent claims are similarly amended as in independent claim 1 noted above.

The claims as written are believed to positively recite features that clearly distinguish over the applied art.

First, applicants note independent claim 1 recites "a scanner having a document feeder connected to the image information storing server, ***not through the users***" (emphasis added). The other independent claims recite a similar feature. That feature is believed to distinguish over the applied art in a way that has not been fully considered in the Office Action.

With respect to the above-noted feature the outstanding Office Action indicates Lesnick discloses the automatic digitation of documents, and not through the users.¹

In reply to that basis for the rejection, applicants note in Lesnick it appears the scanners themselves are connected to the image information storing server through the users. In contrast, the claims are directed to the scanner being connected to the image information storing server, not through the users. Such a feature provides an advantage in that each client does not need to have a scanner, and thus the system can be made compact, which is beneficial in a current business office. Lesnick is not believed to disclose or suggest such a feature.

Independent claim 1 now also specifically recites the image information server “configured to store (1) registered group names and corresponding user names for each respective group name in a group name table and (2) image data in various folders to be read by the plurality of users”. Independent claim 1 also now further recites

wherein when the first sheet of format image data indicates a group name previously registered in the group name table, a controller determines if the group name is registered by retrieving the group name table, and if the group name is registered in the group name table, the image information server stores the sheet image data in an applicable folder or file of each registered user corresponding to the group name[.]

The other independent claims recite similar features. Such features are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

With respect to the above-noted features the outstanding Office Action appears to cite the Microsoft Office reference, specifically stating “Office teaches creating a personal distribution list, containing the names of every one in the distribution group (page 380)”.²

¹ Office Action of January 30, 2007, page 4, line 7 et seq.

² Office Action of January 30, 2007, middle of page 4 and top of page 5.

In reply to that basis for the outstanding rejection, applicants note the Microsoft Office system does not disclose or suggest the claimed features and thus does not cure the deficiencies of Lesnick in view of Gillings. Specifically, the Microsoft Office system merely discloses providing distribution lists for e-mail messages. In the Microsoft Office system the user must select to which distribution list to send data.

In contrast to the operation in the Microsoft Office, in the claims a specific “first sheet of format image data indicates a group name”, the “controller determines if the group name is previously registered in the group name table”, if the group name is registered “by retrieving the group name table”, then “the image information server stores the document image data in an applicable folder or file of each registered user corresponding to the group name”. That is, in the claims a determination is made as to whether a specific document includes a group name previously registered in a group name table, and if the group name is registered by retrieving the group name table. The Microsoft Office has no even similar operation. In the Microsoft Office a user must set up a personal distribution list. Microsoft Office does not have any operation to automatically indicate whether any distribution list is registered, or much less whether any document or input includes a group name.

Applicants further submit even the noted distribution lists in the Microsoft Office system are always stored in a client, and are generally used by the same client when mailing and storing senders’ comments in a prescribed folder or a file of a recipient in a mail server.

In contrast to the operation in the Microsoft Office system, in the claims the group name table is registered in the image information storing server, not in the client, and is then used, i.e. retrieved, from that same server to confirm if the group name read from the sheet exists in the group name table. The Microsoft Office system does not disclose any type of operation.

Thereby, Microsoft Office does not disclose or suggest reading a group name and determining if a group name is previously registered in a group name table, and if registered, by retrieving the group name table, then sending data to each user in the group distribution list. Instead in the Microsoft Office a user must input names to be added to a group name, but no determination at all is made as to whether any input includes a group name.

In such ways, the Microsoft Office disclosure is not at all related to the claimed features, and even if combined with the teachings in Lesnick and Gillings the above-noted claim features would not have been realized.

For such reasons, the claims clearly distinguish over the applied art.

Moreover, applicants respectfully submit the disclosure in the Microsoft Office is not properly applicable to the teachings of Lesnick and Gillings with respect to the claimed features.

The claims are directed to an image scanning technology. In contrast the Microsoft Office employs a typical computer network technology with a keyboard, a dialog box, a program, etc. In the Microsoft Office system a group address is associated with user addresses only utilizing a keyboard of a PC.

In contrast to such systems in the Microsoft Office, the claims recite a format sheet being read by a scanner, as clearly recited in each of the claims. Thus, in the claims a group name inputting is executed at a different device and accordingly at a different place than in a Microsoft Office. In the claims the group name inputting is executed at a scanner. In the Microsoft Office the only group name inputting is at a PC. The Microsoft Office requires the use of keyboard to even make such an entry.

In the Microsoft Office system the user must walk to a PC and input a group name or the like using a keyboard after scanning an image with a scanner, and thereby inputting such a group name or user name becomes a more time consuming and difficult operation.

Such disclosures in the Microsoft Office have no relevance whatsoever to Lesnick or Gillings beyond noting that a distribution list can be made for an e-mail. As discussed above in detail, the claims are not directed to a user setting up an e-mail for a distribution.

Thereby, for such further reasons the claims as written are believed to clearly distinguish over Lesnick in view of Gillings and Microsoft Office.

In view of the present response applicants respectfully submit the claims as written are allowable.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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